

The background of the entire cover is a dark, grainy image of a person whose body is engulfed in bright orange and yellow flames. The person's head is tilted back, and their arms are raised. The flames are intense and appear to be consuming the person. Overlaid on this image is the title text in large, bold, white capital letters.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MODERN REVIVALS

**A series of four sermons presented to the
La Sierra Seventh-day Adventist Church**

MORRIS L. NENDEN

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The Search for the Spectacular

Would you rather die than be healed by the devil, or would you rather be healed by the devil than die? Would you rather burn at the stake than give up your faith, or would you rather give up your faith than burn at the stake? Would you rather continue in defeat in your Christian life another six months until God can show you the way to victory, or would you rather have the devil give you the victory now?

I want to talk today about things that are related to these questions, because there is a real interest nowadays in some of the things that we have seriously questioned in the past. I would like to begin in Matthew, the twenty-fourth chapter, verses 23 and 24.

Now, of course, it is always a thrill to consider Christ's coming again. There is a real blessing in that. But today our focus is on one of the things that take place before He comes again: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

Whatever you get from these verses, one thing is clear: The enemy is going to succeed in almost deceiving the elect, and it is going to be on the basis of signs and wonders. This suggests a truth we all know, that man has always been tremendously impressed with signs and wonders. We have always been impressed by the spectacular and the sensational. If something happens that's out of the course of the usual, we sit up and take notice, whether it is a man going to the moon or anything else. Of course

after six or eight or ten times that becomes the usual, and we don't look anymore.

The other day while some of us were talking, someone told about a particular person who was impressed by the spectacular. And another one said, "Aren't we all?" It seems to be part of human nature. For that reason the enemy is going to capitalize on this trait and almost deceive those who have elected to receive the blessing of God's salvation. This isn't new to our generation. Perhaps we are less victims of it than other generations. That is why the spectacular is going to have to be more spectacular.

In the Bible again and again we have instances of those who were impressed by the sensational. In our Scripture lesson today, Luke 10, the disciples had been sent out on their special mission. Then they came back with one big experience on the top of the list to tell Jesus. "The devils are subject unto us in Your name. We were able to do some wonderful works!" And Jesus had to draw them around and focus their attention upon the fact that it is not the wonderful things that you can do in the realm of the sensational. He said, "The most important thing for you to rejoice in is that your names are written in heaven." That is the big thing!

If we were to have someone rise from the dead, it would hit the headlines; but if someone who has been a sinner is converted, it doesn't even make the small print. Jesus said that heaven's sense of values is just the opposite. The greatest of all miracles is transformed hearts and lives. That is the greatest work of the Holy Spirit. When it comes to casting out devils or doing some wonderful thing, there is nothing unusual to that, because the devil fell from heaven a long time ago.

Consider Luke, the sixteenth chapter, and Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus. Here you have the rich man in torments. In the parable he is pleading that Lazarus be sent to his five brothers. "Because," he said, "if someone will come from the dead, then they will believe." And the message comes back from Abraham that no one is going to believe because of the spectacular. They won't even believe if one rises from the dead. Of course this was also

demonstrated and fulfilled in the experience of Jesus in His death and resurrection.

In Acts, the eighth chapter, notice Simon, who was a sorcerer. The people of his day were amazed by the spectacular and the sensational. They said, "This man is the great power of God." But Simon saw something that was more impressive than what he was doing. He apparently was converted and gave his life over to God, but evidently it didn't last. Later you find him following Peter all the way to Rome. And you find that even Nero, the emperor, was hooked on Simon's sorcery. Simon had something to do, according to tradition, with the martyrdom of Peter. It demonstrates, I suppose, that once you have been hooked, it is hard to get away from it.

Consider the sensational in everyday life. "The \$64,000 Question" was a program that went off the air a long time ago because it was discovered to be a fraud. But it captivated the country. "Have you heard about so and so? They are on again next week. They are going to answer the \$64,000 question!" My wife and I used to argue with some relatives who thought this program was the greatest thing that ever happened—to discover talent like that. We used to argue with them about the fact that these people weren't on the air to discover great talent and genius. They were on the air to advertise a product. And then it came out as fraud! But it advertised the product while it lasted. All across the nation the people were excited about the spectacular.

Another thing that is exciting about the sensational is when you can get something for nothing. That's pretty big in the issue. I remember when I was a boy I heard that Henry Ford would give a new Ford for a certain kind of penny—a certain year and stamped at a certain mint. My father was holding public meetings, and he took offerings down there. Well, I spent the evenings in the back room going through the pennies, and I found one! I sent it in to Henry Ford—Airmail! I could hardly wait for my new Ford. And I would lie awake at night looking at the ceiling. I had the color of it picked out and the white sidewall tires. It was going to be a con-

vertible. I had the trips all planned that I was going to take in it, and my friends that I was going to take along with me—the whole business. Something for nothing! Then I got a letter back from Henry Ford. That's all I got back from Henry Ford. A letter of regret.

You can win a new stereo or a new Mustang at the local service station! Something for nothing. People swallow it, hook, line, and sinker. The human race is impressed by the spectacular.

All right now, I would like to remind you that according to the Scriptures miracles or wonders are no proof of the power of God. That's the first thing I want to nail down here. (See Revelation 13:13, 14.) Of course, if you study God's Word much, you know that this is true already, and we won't spend much time on it. The devil knows how to perform miracles. His angels know how to do miracles and wonders. He deceives the world, those that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.

Revelation 16, verse 14, speaks of "the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world." Kings are going to be deceived, great men, politicians, statesmen—deceived by the wonder-working miracle power of the enemy.

We are familiar with the infirm woman in Luke 13 who had been bound for eighteen years. Bound by whom? Satan! And if Satan can bind a woman for eighteen years, would it not be logical to believe that he could release these bonds if he so chose? Of course! But *Jesus* rebuked his power, and the miracle happened.

We are familiar with the story of Job, his boils, and who brought them. And if the enemy can bring boils to Job, maybe he can also take away the thing that caused the boils, whatever it was. Then through the natural function of the human body a "miracle of healing" will take place.

We know about Pharaoh and his magicians' rods in the ancient Egyptian court and how Moses was matched after his miracle of the rod becoming a snake. We know all these things. They are in the Bible. It isn't God alone who can work miracles.

The main thing I want to try to convince you of in the beginning is

not to be impressed by the spectacular. Now, it is true that Jesus performed miracles, and they were spectacular; and when Jesus comes again, it is going to be spectacular. We could become so calloused by resistance toward the spectacular that we would accept or receive nothing. But the point here is: *Never judge truth by the spectacular!* Never judge whether a thing is of God or not by the spectacular. It won't work. It is insufficient. It is not enough.

There is in recent times a new form of Pentecostalism called neo-Pentecostalism. It does not bring with it the traditional types of activity, such as rolling in the aisles, frothing at the mouth, throwing babies over your shoulder into the row behind you, as some of us have seen. It does not carry with it all of the confusion and the pandemonium that the traditional has been seriously questioned for by other more fundamental and conservative Christians. This neo-Pentecostalism, however, because of its new look, is jumping all boundaries and invading all denominations—the Episcopalians, Catholics, and many Protestant groups, including the conservative ones. And it would not be illogical to assume that the day will come when it will jump the boundaries into churches like your own. The question is: How are we going to decide if it is of God or if it is not?

There is a great burden today on the part of Christian people everywhere to experience more of the blessings and gifts of the Holy Spirit and all that goes with it. We must not pass this off as unimportant as we've sometimes done, because that will simply drive people farther into it, whether it is right *or* wrong.

For instance, I was holding meetings one time in a little town in Oregon. After the meeting a lady came by the door and said, "Do you believe in the baptism of the Holy Ghost?"

I said, "Yes, I do."

"Well," she said, "you're the first Adventist I ever knew who did."

"Well," I said, "it's in the Bible, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"If it is in the Bible, I believe in it."

But she had the impression that there wasn't a single person in

my church who believed in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We ought to believe in that, hadn't we? Of course!

Do we believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Well, we have come up with some pretty fancy rationalizations on those. I have heard people say the fact that a good Christian medical doctor can do a good job in his practice shows he has the gift of healing. But we don't apply that to a good doctor who doesn't care two cents about God. We don't say he has a gift of the Holy Spirit, do we? So that doesn't work out.

I have heard people say the fact that a man can go over to Japan and learn the Japanese language and pass his medical exam in one year shows he has the gift of tongues. Well, that is not what the Bible is talking about when it talks about the gift of tongues, is it?

It is possible for a person to be so cold and so gun-shy concerning the wrong use or the wrong manifestations that he doesn't really accept any of them. I believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are going to be demonstrated and present and evident in God's church among God's people before this whole mess is over in the world, don't you? I believe they are all going to be there, and everything that was witnessed in the days of the apostles, we are told, will be seen again. So let's not sell God short.

One of our problems in Laodicea is that we have become cold and indifferent. But there are people fellowshiping or trying to fellowship in Laodicea who are looking for something that they are not finding. And that's too bad too, isn't it? Wouldn't it be too bad to have such a cold church that someone on the rebound goes out looking somewhere else for an experience that they should have found here? Wouldn't that be too bad? I want to read you something about that in a minute.

But there are people now who are seriously debating whether to go here or there or someplace else looking for some special gift or some special manifestation. There are those who are going and there are those who are finding it and there are those who are questioning it and have been debating it. I would like to assure you that I haven't jumped into the pulpit with this subject overnight. I

have been looking at it for a long time. And whatever we say here that's misunderstood, we will clarify next week and the week after, because this is a series of four.

All right, if you go out looking for some special gift or some special experience that you have not known before, here are some of the things that you may find out there. I am talking from the word of inspiration and from personal experiences of people who have been out there.

1. You will find there an undeniable presence or power that your senses cannot deny. And, by the way, why are we impressed by the spectacular? Because of our senses. The deceptions of the enemy at the very end are going to be on the basis of our senses. I see, I hear, I feel something that I know is supernatural. It's spectacular. It's sensational.

2. You will see the miraculous. If you go looking very far, you will see it. You will find it in Los Angeles today. You can find it in a number of different places and not have to go very far—miracles or supernatural things that you cannot explain by human methods.

3. You will find great emphasis on the Bible and on Jesus and the uplifting of Jesus.

4. You will find a great emphasis upon love as our great need and upon happiness and joy based on love.

5. You will find what appears to you to be a more exalted system of religion, a deeper experience of faith, or a deeper insight into things that you have never seen before. And you will say, "This must be the power of God."

6. Finally, you may find, and probably undoubtedly will find, people whose lives have been changed.

Now, as I analyze these, I wonder to myself, "Are these proof of the power of God at work?" In one sense we might say, "It has to be the power of God to have all of those qualifications." That is why I would like to point you to something that has been given as a special gift to the church. If you do not accept it as a special gift, then, of course, that is your business. But I have been thankful for insights that have been tailor-made to help me understand a little

more about what is going to happen at the very end. We have books such as *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*. I am going to quote significant statements on spiritualism.

1. On finding something that is undeniable—a presence and a power that your senses cannot deny. *The Great Controversy*, page 554: “[Satan] will present his temptations to men in a manner to pervert the senses of all who are not shielded by divine power.”

2. On seeing the miraculous: *The Great Controversy*, page 588: “Miracles will be wrought.” They won’t *appear* to be wrought, but *will* be wrought. “The sick *will* be healed.” And you know that would be a hard decision to make, wouldn’t it, friends? If you were dying of some disease and you had the option of going to some place in Los Angeles and getting healed, would you choose to die rather than be healed, even if it was the devil? That would be a hard decision to make. I believe that some of us may have to make that kind of decision one of these days, don’t you? We may have to. It might not be God’s will that I be healed when it could be the devil’s will. “Miracles *will* be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed.”

3. Concerning great emphasis on the Bible: *The Great Controversy*, page 588: “As the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, . . . their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power.” On page 558 we read this: “While it [spiritualism] formerly denounced Christ and the Bible, it now *professes* to accept both.”

4. Great emphasis upon love. How could the devil be behind something like that? *The Great Controversy*, page 558: “Love is dwelt upon [in spiritualism] as the chief attribute of God.” *The Great Controversy*, page 554: “[The enemy] appeals to the reason by the presentation of elevating themes; he delights the fancy with enrapturing scenes; and he enlists the affections by his eloquent portrayals of love and charity.” If God has love in His Book as one of His greatest traits, in His own heart and in the lives of His people—if love is heavy in God’s program, then the enemy is certainly going to have some kind of counterfeit for it, isn’t he? So a great emphasis on love doesn’t prove anything either.

5. What about this more exalted system of religion? *The Great Controversy*, page 589: "Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people, and professing to present a new and more exalted system of religious faith."

"Oh," someone says, "but I have never heard truth like I have heard it at this place or that place. Why, there are insights that I have never seen before." A beautiful, more exalted system of religious faith fits in perfectly with the enemy's scheme and design. Again *The Great Controversy*, page 554: "And he appeals to the reason by the presentation of elevating themes."

What about changed lives? I would just like to ask you: On the basis of logic and reason, if you were the devil and you had caused someone to have a horrible life of sin, wouldn't it be within your option to withdraw from him so he wouldn't be tortured by your temptations? Wouldn't it be within your option to allow people to have a good life, not just a bad life? Here is one from *The Great Controversy* again, page 509: "The tempter often works most successfully through those who are least suspected of being under his control. . . . Many a man of cultured intellect and pleasant manners, who would not stoop to what is commonly regarded as an immoral act, is but a polished instrument in the hands of Satan."

The devil doesn't put everybody in the gutter. He'll make use of some people whose lives appear to be changed—the good, the moral, the ethical, the kind and loving. Let me ask you another question. If the devil got a person on drugs and is the one responsible in the first place, don't you suppose he would have the option of withdrawing himself with those temptations and allowing a person to have the victory over drugs? Would this be possible? I am only asking. In other words, you *could* come up with the conclusion that the fact that a person's life has been changed doesn't prove the power of God.

So I sat down and read all of these things that I've read to you, and I looked at all of these possibilities, and I said to myself, "Now, if I can't decide what is true by whether there is a presence or power

there, or whether there is the miraculous going on, or whether the emphasis on the Bible and Jesus is heavy, or whether there is love and happiness and greater insight into religious faith or even changed lives, then, pray tell, on what basis can I decide it?" That is the big question! It looks very tricky. How are we going to decide?

I would like to give you a little description from the same book again. *The Great Controversy*, page 464, gives a description of something that takes place at the end of time just before Jesus comes. "Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times."

Does that sound good? No more ice-skating down the center aisle of the church. A revival, the likes of which has not been seen since the days of the apostles. We need that. The Spirit of God will be poured out upon His children.

Now the plot thickens. Listen. "The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and *before* the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power—"

"Right there you can stop," I can hear you saying. "Well, which churches are they? Which ones?" And if you are one that says, "That must mean all the churches except the Seventh-day Adventist," be careful, take it easy.

"In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the whole Christian world."

That is going to happen. It is going to happen before the genuine revival. Whether what we see now is genuine or false, you can conclude for sure that something is right upon us. And for that we can thank God, can't we? The time for the great revival is here.

What are you doing about it, friend?

Now notice this phrase: "Those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power." That is where the counterfeit will take place. (Read *Evangelism*, page 365, for further insight.) And here is something else we are told about the counterfeit. "Antichrist is going to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except *by the Holy Scriptures*. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested."—*Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 4, page 411.

In fact, in my study on this subject, I came across the startling realization that even those who are under God's protecting power are going to be faced one of these days by their dead loved ones showing up. I used to think that would happen only to the people that were wandering into the séance. Not so. You may have your grandmother or aunt or uncle walk into your room some night. And you may tend to question the validity of your own experience unless you read ahead of time that it is going to happen even to God's people. Will you be able to handle it? A counterfeit is very close to the truth. We are going to have to test it *by the Word of God*.

But look, we have already thrown out a whole package full of things that we thought we could test it by! What's left? Well, in the light of our study so far, we are left with one conclusion: Whenever you hear about something that is a marvelous manifestation in terms of power and insight and love and all of this, don't just pick up your bags and run there to find out what it is all about. In other words, don't go out searching for the spectacular.

I'd like to ask the question, "Why is it that people go searching for something? Why do they go in the first place?" I think this comment is particularly to the point in the book *Evangelism*, pages 598 and 599. "We as a people have fallen into error." I am glad I didn't say that. Someone else said it. What is the error? "We acknowledge the claims of God's law, and teach the people the duty of rendering obedience. We believe in giving everything, but we do not see that we must take as well as give. We fail to have that trust, that faith,

that keeps the soul abiding in Christ. . . . Through a lack of faith, many who seek to obey the commandments of God have little peace and joy."

Have you discovered that? If I don't have an experience "one to one" with Jesus, then obeying the commandments of God and trying to do right is not going to bring me peace and joy. Then what is the tendency for me to do? Notice this: "Many feel a lack in their experience; they desire something which they have not; and thus some are led to attend holiness meetings, and are charmed with the sentiments of those who break the law of God."

Then why is it that I might be inspired and persuaded to go off to some group or meeting looking for something? Because of the coldness of my own experience. Because I don't know and experience righteousness by faith. Because of the coldness of my fellow church members. I say that it will be a wonderful day when, in God's church, people will find the answer to the depths of their experience that they are looking for instead of having to go look somewhere else. Will you buy that?

But the warning is given about the same type of thing now. *Evangelism*, page 364, states: "There is no safety, much less benefit, for our people in attending these popular holiness meetings; let us rather search the Scriptures with much carefulness and earnest prayer, that we may understand the ground of our faith." No *safety*, much less *benefit*!

"Well," someone says, "that is talking about holiness meetings the way they were conducted back in the 1890s, 1900s, and around there." May I suggest you take another look as to the common denominators then and now. At least it's worth looking at twice.

Another reason people are casting about in neo-Pentecostalism is that they are looking for shortcuts—for the new Ford—for the \$64,000. They have been defeated Christians, and they are looking for victory. In fact, I take the position that there are many of my fellow church members who are defeated Christians, and they would be wide open for almost anything that would give them a sense of the certainty of their own salvation. Is this possible?

Now, if I were the enemy and I could some way fill that vacuum and in the same process get the person hooked on some spiritualistic phenomenon, it would be the only logical thing to do, wouldn't it? To give a person victory and at the same time give him some tremendous manifestation of the spirit—which is the wrong gift because it came from the wrong spirit—would be the logical thing for the devil to do.

Now, God has His way of changing our lives, and it has to do with the surrender of the will. It has to do with giving up on ourselves, which is a traumatic, basic struggle. It is hard work to get together enough dollars to buy a new Ford—even a new *Ford* nowadays—and it takes some real soul searching and some broken and contrite hearts who have fallen on the Rock, Jesus Christ, to discover the secret of victory and power in Christ. If there is an easier way, a shortcut, the average person who is influenced by the spectacular and wants the void filled *now* might say, "Come on. Give it to me."

Does God bring a person to obedience before He gives him the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or does He give him the gifts of the Holy Spirit before He leads him to obedience? That is the question. And by obedience we are talking about all of the commandments of God.

If you go out looking in certain holiness gatherings today for something you don't have, you *will* find power, miracles, Bible, Jesus, love, and changed lives. But the one thing that you ought to find in the end, whatever else you find, should be people who are keeping all of God's commandments.

"Oh," you are going to say, "now you are turning into a legalistic, nit-picking, proud Adventist." Just to prove that we're not arguing for denominational pride I am going to take the position that you may disagree with.

Let's consider two churches. Here is a church that knows about the law of God and all of the commandments but doesn't have a deep experience with Christ. Here's another church over here that doesn't know about the law and the commandments and all the truth along that line, but they do seem to have an experience with

Christ. OK. On which of these groups is the Holy Spirit going to be manifested in great spiritual gifts and manifestations? In which of the two?

I don't expect it to happen any more in one than the other. I don't expect to find the Holy Spirit in His genuine manifestations of spiritual gifts in a group of people who are not keeping all of God's commandments any more than I do in the group of people who are trying to keep God's commandments but are not doing it through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Neither one!

I believe that the manifestations of God's Spirit in all of His power are going to be when you get both of these factors together: Those who keep the commandments of God, all of them, and who also know the experience with Christ. Then you will have the manifestations of God's Spirit and His ultimate work in the final closing of this earth's history. This means that I may not be any better than anyone else as far as any reason for spiritual denominational pride is concerned.

Here are some of the indications that show us how we can *finally* decide when it comes to the great cleaving point of God's law. *Testimonies*, volume 9, page 16: "Satan, surrounded by evil angels, . . . will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. . . . God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18." That sign is the Sabbath. (If you want to do further study, you can read *Selected Messages*, book 2, pages 1 to 60.) One more, volume 5 of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, page 1099: "No one need be deceived. The law of God is as sacred as His throne, and by it every man that cometh into the world is to be judged. There is no other standard by which to test character."

"Oh, but they love!" That's not enough. "But they like the Bible." That's not enough. "But they have great insight into the Scriptures—" That's not it. There is no other standard by which to test character than by the law of God. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

"Now, shall the case be decided according to the Word of God,

or shall man's pretensions be credited? . . .

"We must beware of the pretended holiness that *permits* transgression of the law of God." Notice it doesn't say "champions" transgression, but *permits* it, merely permits it.

One more which you will find in the *Review and Herald* extra of December 24, 1889. "There is a work to be done for this time in fitting a people to stand in the day of trouble, and all must act their part in this work. They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ." (There it is. That's number one. And here's number two.) "Be so fortified by the truth [God's Word], that the delusions of Satan shall not be accepted by them as genuine manifestations of the power of God."

Two safeguards—the experience of the righteousness of Christ in my life and knowing the truth of God's Word, which includes all of God's law and commandments. I need both of those in order to detect what's wrong or what's right. And we have already seen that we need both of them in order to have the gifts and the wonderful power of the Holy Spirit in His ultimate manifestations.

I would like to give a note of real hope and comfort for the person who has sincerely been searching and casting around. I don't believe God is going to let this person be deceived. (I do worry that if a person is deceived when it's *hard* to tell what is wrong or right that he might be hooked by the time it does become *obvious* to tell whether it is right or wrong.)

But I take courage when I read this in *The Great Controversy*, page 560: "Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense. 'Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee' ([Rev. 3] verse 10), is the Saviour's promise. He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan." So for those who have a great longing to know something deeper and greater, who may have been casting about looking: God loves you. He is with you. But He also, I am sure,

wants us to consider seriously some of these warning factors.

God has never invited us to go out looking for the spectacular. Don't be impressed by it.

If I can't get the Holy Spirit, and all of His gifts that He has to offer me, in my own closet, on my own campus, with my own group and my own company, then I am not going out looking someplace else for it. Is that safe enough? I don't know of anywhere in God's Word where He says to go out somewhere looking for what He has promised to give me in my own closet on my own knees. Therefore I do not even have to judge another person, whether he is of God or the devil. I can say, "That is up to God to decide." In the meantime I can safely stay away from gatherings under question and not be charged with dragging my feet or falling behind God.

And, finally, don't ever go out looking for shortcuts to salvation. Shortcuts are dangerous. You walk down the mountain on the hike, and you see signs along the path: "Don't cut trail." Why? That's dangerous. "Oh, but it takes me longer to stay on the path." That's all right. Take the longer way. Shortcuts are dangerous and often longer in the end. God's way is the only way. Shall we pray.

Dear Father in heaven, we realize that we are only human, and we hesitate to plunge in and try to handle something as heavy as this. But we pray for Your guidance and Your Spirit that we might know. And You know, Lord, above everything else, that we need here in this church now Your presence and Your power. Lord, send it to us and help us to be open for it. Help us to have everything the Spirit waits to give. Because of Your promise, help us to go to our knees and admit our need; please, Lord, guide carefully those who are searching, maybe, somewhere else. Be with them we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Today we continue in part two of what we began last week—a study of the Holy Spirit. We have a lot of ground to cover. I am going to move right along in a more or less topical, old-fashioned Bible study on this question.

Last week we tried to make the plea, on the basis of authority, that first, we shouldn't go out looking for the spectacular, and second, we shouldn't look for shortcuts in the Christian life. It is dangerous to look for shortcuts, always has been. You may find them, but they may not genuinely be shortcuts.

Now, some people have said, "Well, it sounds like you are becoming a nit-picking old legalist. Do you think that the only place you are ever going to get anything is within your own church?"

If there is anyone who is against denominational pride, it is "yours truly." I would like to emphasize that. There is a great deal of denominational pride nowadays, so I would like to clarify one thing here. There is a difference between going somewhere looking for some supernatural manifestation or some special blessing of the Holy Spirit and going somewhere for fellowship with others or for an opportunity to witness for your faith and your belief. There is a difference between the two. That is the main snag of misunderstanding that I discovered after last week in the foolishness of preaching.

All right, next we noticed that one of the main reasons some people go out looking for some special blessing is because of a cold church, and that is too bad. They haven't found in their own

group or company the kind of help and spiritual fervor that they need and that they are looking for.

By the way, friends, young people today are looking for people who will freely and comfortably talk about the experience with Jesus, and it is high time we got through being nothing but uncomfortable at dinner, or Sabbath afternoon, or any other time, bringing up the things of the deeper spiritual life. You know, when a young person finds that someone is not interested in talking about things of faith and surrender and the Holy Spirit and all the rest of it, and all they can talk about is the headlines and what happened last week and what the weather is like and when they are going to the mountains—young people in that kind of environment are going to start looking somewhere for someone who will talk about the deeper things of spiritual life. We ought to take a long look at that in every professed Christian home.

Last week we also suggested one or two points as to how to tell the difference between the true and the false. There was a two-pronged position. (1) We must have the experience of righteousness by faith. (2) We must know the truth of God's Word. One without the other is not going to be sufficient.

I believe there are some of my own church members who are going to rely upon some kind of knowledge of the Word of God to take them safely through the closing scenes who do not have the experience of righteousness by faith, and they will not make it through. I believe there are others who have the experience of righteousness by faith, but who will neglect the Word of God as the measure of their truth, lose their experience, and not make it through the deception of the last days.

Now, there is something that I would like to add today. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth." He also said, concerning the Holy Spirit, that *He* is the Spirit of truth. The Bible teaches that all of God's commandments are truth, so in the ultimate you are going to have agreement and unity among all of these avenues of truth: the Bible, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and between all of His commandments. That is a point to nail down. That's why we noticed in our

previous study that Isaiah 8:20 is yet going to be very significant in terms of measuring truth. Are the people who are supposed to have truth supporting obedience to God's commandments, His law?

We noticed that measuring truth is not simply done through power, or good feeling, or the miraculous, or the Bible, or emphasis on Jesus, or an atmosphere of love, or spiritual insights, or necessarily changed lives. This is not enough, and I would like to add three more today. (1) The fact that someone may be able to read someone else's thoughts doesn't prove anything. (2) The fact that a person is sincere, because he fasts (goes without eating) and prays, doesn't prove anything. (3) The fact that he talks in tongues doesn't prove anything. But that is part three for next week.

Here we are talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What is it? Who can get it? Who needs it? How do you go about receiving it, and so forth? I would like to turn, first of all, to Luke 3:16. "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." This is a statement of John the Baptist. He predicted it concerning Jesus, and you have the counterpart of this statement in all of the other gospels, Matthew, Mark, and John, which we will spare you at the moment. It was a prediction by one of the greatest prophets, John the Baptist, that people would be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Now, in Luke 24:49, Jesus Himself took the position that it was going to happen, and He called it here "the promise of my Father." "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." These are Jesus' own words on the prediction.

If you will study the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Scripture, you will find a number of phrases that refer to the same thing. It is called, in some places, being filled with the Spirit. It is called the gift of the Spirit. It is mentioned as being endued with power from on high, and, as we noticed here, it is also called the promise of the Father—all referring to the same thing, the same experience.

Now we go to the book of Acts and the fulfillment of Jesus' and John the Baptist's prediction. It is found in the first chapter, verses 4 and 5. Here they are recalling the statement of Jesus in Luke 24, which we just read. "And, being assembled together with them, [Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

So here they are bringing back the recollection of Jesus' own statement. Now, in the eighth verse you have another statement connecting the baptism with a definite purpose. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be *witnesses* unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the promise, the gift, the baptism, is for the purpose of what? Witnessing! Power for witnessing.

Now that we have looked at the statement of Jesus and the apostles waiting for this to come, I would like to take the position and support it with Scripture that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a definite experience, and one may know whether he has received it or not. Otherwise, why would He tell the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem? If they didn't know when they received it, they might still be tarrying there waiting for it. Isn't that right? If you are going to tarry until it comes, you have to know when it comes. Did they? Well, of course they did, and this in itself suggests a definite experience.

He says, "Wait, not many days hence, something is going to happen." We also find support for this in Acts 19:2, where the apostle Paul came to a group of believers in Ephesus and "he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Now, Paul is obviously expecting a definite answer. He is not expecting "I think so," or "What is it all about?" or "I hope so." He is expecting a definite answer. And he got a definite answer. It is a rather tragic answer.

They said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any

Holy Ghost.” So Paul proceeded immediately to the point of helping these people receive the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit. Now, of course, he must have been a little suspicious about their not having received it in the first place. Perhaps there was not the joy that he expected for Christians, or maybe the company which was only twelve in number had been twelve in number too long, and Paul was suspicious of that. If a person has been baptized with the Holy Spirit, how long can he remain in his own little exclusive group? Not forever.

Second, I would like to take the position today in our study of this subject that the work of the Holy Spirit is distinct from and in addition to conversion or to His regenerating work. The baptism of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily come at the time of conversion, although I believe that it would be God’s will that it did happen. It is usually a separate and distinct experience.

Consider it for a moment from the standpoint of books like *The Acts of the Apostles*, and others by the same writer, where believers are told they should get together and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If this is true, this indicates that it is a distinct and separate work from what made us believers in the first place. But let’s notice some other Scripture evidence on this.

The disciples who waited for the baptism of the Holy Spirit were already born again. No one would argue that. But someone might say, “Well, that is a little different. You can’t use that for support, because when the disciples were born again the Holy Spirit hadn’t been given yet.” This may be true, but at least they were born again before they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Let’s look at another instance in the book of Acts, the eighth chapter, where we find something concerning a group of believers in Samaria. Acts 8:12. You recall that Philip was one of the deacons. He had been chosen because he was a man full of the Holy Spirit. He had gone to Samaria, when he had a little time off from his deaconing, and he went to preaching instead. You know, that is a wonderful thing when a deacon can’t stand still just

passing the offering plate and he goes out and starts preaching.

He went there to Samaria, and certainly the Samaritans must have heard about the baptism of the Spirit in Jerusalem, because Samaria wasn't that far away from Jerusalem, was it? If he was a Spirit-filled man, they must have had some kind of evidence that he was. So Philip preached (verse 12) "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, [and] they were baptized, both men and women."

All right, so you have a group of people baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, obviously people who must have been born again—at least *some* of them must have been born again. Maybe they had a campaign just to get church members in those days. Maybe they baptized anything that moved, like sometimes happens nowadays. But the evidence is that they were much more solid than that. You will have to assume that there must have been at least someone who was born again in this group of believers. Right?

It continues (verse 14): "When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon *none* of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." So here you have a definite experience distinct from, separate from, the initial experience of conversion. We could pursue this point further, but perhaps that is enough for now.

On the basis of these Bible passages we are going to say that if a man is born again, he has salvation; but he might not yet be fitted for God's service. He has the Holy Spirit, but may not have the Holy Spirit in the ultimate sense. There is at least one exception to this recorded in Scripture, and that is the experience of Cornelius, who must have been a mighty, sincere, faithful man. He must have been a surrendered man, because Peter went to preach to him Jesus Christ and he received the Holy Spirit even before he was baptized. He must have accepted everything that God had for him on one

occasion. although I have wondered if maybe Cornelius wasn't a student of Scripture and a believer long before he called for Peter.

All right. number three. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is always connected with and primarily for the purpose of service or the Christian witness. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not to make us holy. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not to make us happy. You ought to be happy before you receive it, and you will continue to be happy after you receive it, but that is not its primary purpose. It is to make us *witnesses*.

Now. I am going to take a position like I have heard some of the old-fashioned preachers take. Have you ever heard this: "\$3,000 offered for a text"? I have heard of that in the old days—in the Bible-thumping, sawdust-trail days, you know. Well, I am not making a \$3,000 offer here, but I am going to say that there is not one single passage in the Bible where the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not directly connected with testimony or service.

Now I would like to proceed to the question: The baptism of the Holy Spirit, who can have it? Let's go way back for just a moment. Luke 1:15. John the Baptist had it, and this was before the Day of Pentecost. That is interesting, isn't it? John the Baptist had it from the day of his birth. John 1:41. His mother, Elisabeth, had it. John 1:67. His father, Zechariah, had it, so this was a family experience, and that would be a wonderful thing, too, wouldn't it?

In Luke 2:25 and 26 Simeon, the elderly prophet in the temple had it, and he prophesied. This was before the Day of Pentecost. So the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Spirit is not something only since Pentecost. although it seems that before Pentecost it was given to certain individuals here and there, whereas, at Pentecost, it seemed to be poured out upon the whole church in a more complete way. There is a difference before and after Pentecost. But we have evidence that holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, so don't say that the baptism of the Spirit or being filled with the Spirit is confined only since Pentecost. You can't really say that.

Now, another interesting thing is that Jesus had it. Acts 10:38.

Have you ever noticed that? God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power. What did Jesus do then? He “went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

Luke 3:21 and 22: Jesus received a special baptism of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove. Luke 4, verse 1: He came into a certain region filled with the Spirit. Luke 4:14: again filled with the Spirit; and in verse 18: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”

Jesus had it. He knew it. In fact, the truth is that Jesus did His wonderful works and lived His beautiful life through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is important for me to know that about Jesus because the same thing is available for me. Do you believe that? And here is something else. Jesus received a new baptism of the Holy Spirit every day. *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 139: “From hours spent with God He [Jesus] came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. *Daily* He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.” If Jesus needed that, and He was the Son of God, who else do you think might need it? Is there any reason for me to go along without it and without any interest in it or relegating it all to some fanatical excitement somewhere? There is no reason whatever for that kind of thing.

Another question: How many can have it? Ephesians 5:18: Here is a command from Paul. “Be not drunk with wine—” Do you believe that? Do you accept that? That’s a command. All right, if this is truth, the first part of it, then the last part of it must be truth too—“but be filled with the Spirit.” Is that just as much truth as the first part? All right, that is Paul’s thinking on the subject.

Acts 2:38 and 39 becomes exciting because it doesn’t confine the baptism to someone with white hair and arthritis. It brings it within the reach of every person. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise [What promise? The promise of the Holy Ghost.] is unto you, and to your *children*, and to all that are afar off,” [Here he is talking about the Gentiles as well.] “even as

many as the Lord our God shall call.” Follow that word “call” through, and you discover it is speaking of the ones that have accepted God’s call of the plan of salvation, those who have been called to conversion and have accepted what Jesus has offered. So it includes all that are afar off.

It includes as many as are called to repentance and conversion. How many does that include? Everybody. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come, and that takes in the children. So to the boys and girls here today this is for you too—the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

All right, now I want to consider something else. I want you to notice four phases of the Holy Spirit’s work. Of course, a person must have the Holy Spirit in his life in some way, or he is not even God’s. You read that in Romans 8:9: “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” So we must have the Spirit in some sense in order even to be Christians, but here are the four phases.

1. He is going to convict the world of sin. John 16:8. In this work of the Holy Spirit, He includes the whole world. Nobody is left out. We are aware of that. We don’t have to dwell on that too much, although we could.

2. The second work of the Holy Spirit is to convert the sinner. John 3:3 to 5: Here you have the statement to Nicodemus where Jesus is giving him very clear instructions concerning the new birth. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” All right, so this is one of the works of the Spirit.

You might read one more text on that in Titus 3:5. In fact, I am going to read the whole thing. Something speaks especially to my own heart in verses 3 to 5 of Titus 3: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.” I don’t know if you get hit by words or the groupings of words, but there is something about this that I am not going to go to *The New English Bible* or to *The Living Bible*,

Paraphrased to try and find any improvement on. But here it says, "After *that* [After what? After all the problems I have had in my life.] the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared." Has that appeared to you?

Then comes verse 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." So the Holy Ghost is involved in regeneration or conversion or the new birth. Romans 12, verse 2, says that He does this by renewing our minds.

3. I want to come now to the third work of the Holy Spirit. Right here we are going to have to spend more time sometime. But I want to take the position, on the basis of human experience of which we are all too cruelly aware, that when a person is born again he is not necessarily cleansed of all unrighteousness in the actual, behavioral sense of the word. Do you know what I am saying here? This is a fact that a lot of people have overlooked, and therefore they get discouraged and become backsliders.

Many young people have felt that when they are converted they are supposed to be completely different now and never again will they have any of the problems that they had before. Then they wake up to the realization that it didn't happen that way, and they say, "Well, I guess I was never converted, and I don't know how to get converted." Then they go along uninterested the rest of their lives. Has this happened?

Now, I am sure this is going to sound like heresy to somebody, and that's why we ought to take more time on it, but a new heart at conversion is not necessarily a clean heart or a cleansed heart. In fact, I want to describe what conversion is in these words. Conversion is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart or mind giving us a new capacity to know and to love God. That may be all that it is. If I have changed from rebellion against God, and I am not fighting God any longer, if I am on His side, and I want to learn to know Him better, I have been converted. The Holy Spirit gives me that new capacity to know Him, but I may still have a heart that needs to be cleansed.

I will give you just a little bit of support for that in a moment, but the work of the Holy Spirit in its third phase of cleansing the Christian's heart and his life is accomplished by what we call the indwelling of the Spirit. Romans 8:9 to 11: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. . . . But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you."

You know, I was thrilled to the bone with this song that we heard from the choir a little bit ago. What a message and how beautifully done! We shall not all sleep. We are going to be changed; and how is it going to happen? Through the Spirit who has already quickened us or given us new life, spiritually, now and really in terms of the future eternal life.

John 14:15 and 16, Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter." And what is He going to do? "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Verse 17.

First Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19 speak of our bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit where He *dwells* and carries forward His work of cleansing the Christian from all unrighteousness. Cleansing *begins* at conversion, but it may not be completed for a period of time. A new heart is not necessarily a cleansed heart. It is a saved heart, however, and a person is saved any time from the moment that he has accepted Christ and is seeking to know Him better as long as he maintains that experience and that acquaintance.

Here is a comment from a book that you may have read, *The Desire of Ages*, page 671: "Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tenden-

cies to evil." The third work of the Spirit is to cleanse the heart of the Christian by His indwelling.

4. The fourth work of the Spirit we find in Acts 1:8. We might title it *Empowering for Witness*. Now, the important thing to notice here, and this is extremely important, is that a person doesn't receive the fourth manifestation of the Spirit, power for witnessing, until he has experienced the third manifestation of the Spirit, the power for the cleansed life. A person who does not know the cleansed life is not going to have the baptism of the Spirit in its ultimate, final phase. Therefore, it is dangerous for any person to look for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and all of His gifts and His spiritual manifestation in the realm of the supernatural if he doesn't have the cleansed life first.

If he does fall into the trap of looking for some special manifestation before he has a cleansed life, and that means victory over all known sin, then the devil may answer his prayer and give him something that is erroneous and false. That is really one of the main points for which we have gone through this Bible study. This is the climax of the whole thing for this second part. If you do not know that you have victory over all known sin in your life, don't go out searching for some special manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power. Don't do it! Don't do it! Will you buy that? *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 507: "It was by the confession and *forsaking of sin*, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. *The same work*, only in greater degree, must be done now."

Now, the tragic thing is that so many church members in the professed church of God have experienced only the first work of the Holy Spirit—the new birth. Thank God for that much, but it is too bad to idle along in the first phase of His work for ten, twenty, thirty, forty years. Isn't it? That's too bad. That's why you have cold churches. That's why you have Laodicea. That's why you have people who are uncomfortable talking about the things of deeper spiritual life. And that's why you have young people out looking for

something better. We ought to know the Spirit for cleansing of our lives, and we ought to know the Spirit in His final phase of empowering for witness.

Just one more thought here in terms of the relationship of the cleansed life and the witness. You can lose the gifts of the Holy Spirit once you have known them. You know how? Here is one sentence from a book that you have in your library, *The Great Controversy*, page 472: "The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit."

Now someone is saying, "How long does it take between the new birth and the filling, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit? How long does it take?" And someone else is saying, "It took me too long, so I gave up." That's right. There are a lot of backsliders for that reason. Well, this is a hard question to answer. It took Paul three days. Obviously, he was converted on the road to Damascus, but it wasn't until three days later that, under the ministration of Ananias, he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It took Peter and other disciples three years.

Have you ever noticed that the disciples' lives were not really changed much during the time that they were with Jesus? They were still arguing and bickering among each other right until the Last Supper. Is that right? They knew the new birth, but they didn't know the cleansed life, and that again suggests the gap that there often is between the new birth and the cleansed life. So it took Peter at least three years.

It is interesting, however, that it doesn't take long once you see the need of it and how to go about it. You have six weeks from the time Peter cursed and swore until the Day of Pentecost. Now that's not too bad, is it? Six weeks. How long did it take Jacob? Twenty years. If you want to study something interesting, study his life—the time from Bethel when he saw the ladder from earth to heaven to the time at the Brook Jabbok when he wrestled with the angel, at least twenty years. The point of experiencing the cleansing of the Holy Spirit is the point of total surrender to Christ, which it took him twenty years to experience.

What about David? I don't know how long, but I do know that when he had already killed Uriah and when he had already taken Bathsheba, and when Nathan had come and had pointed his finger at him, David got down and wrote the penitential psalm, Psalm 51. He said, "*Create* in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." He was asking for something he hadn't known before, and he said, "Create." That is an interesting thought that I must pursue further, because I just found it this week. The cleansing of the Holy Spirit is a *crisis*, not a process. It is just as much a crisis in the life of the believer as his conversion in the first place. Today you don't have it and tomorrow you do, through the Spirit. We don't believe in evolution when we talk about creation. David said, "*Create* in me a clean heart, O God."

Finally, the baptism of the Holy Spirit—how to obtain it. (1) Accept Jesus as your only hope of salvation. Acts 4:12. We are going to have to go quickly through these four or five points. (2) Renounce all sin. Acts 2:38. (3) By obedience. Acts 5:32. God has given His Spirit to those who obey Him, and this includes not only obedience in terms of His law, it also includes obedience in service for witness. (4) And the next one: thirst for it. Our Scripture reading today, John 7:37 to 39. We want it at any cost. (And we want it for the right motive. Let's not get into the boots with Simon the sorcerer, who wanted it for the wrong reason. There is only one reason to get it—to glorify Christ.) (5) And, finally, ask for it. Luke 11:13. God is willing to give the gift of His Holy Spirit to those who ask for it.

In conclusion, I want to read this paragraph from the book *The Desire of Ages*, page 672, which suggests that we have this great need of the baptism of the Holy Spirit still awaiting us and we ought to seek it. "Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. [We have noticed some of those conditions today.] There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk *about* Christ and *about* the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine

agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Phil. 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive." Does that sound like something that ought to be available for us? The baptism with the Holy Spirit. I need it. I want it, and I want all that God has to give me for power in my life and in His service. Do you? Shall we pray.

Dear Father in heaven, we have looked at a lot of scripture here today and have gone kind of fast; but we appreciate the total picture of what you are waiting to do for so many of us. Forgive us, we pray, for going along with as little as we have, and guide us into the experience of complete submission to You for Your work. Make us a warm church, we pray, where people love to talk about Jesus and can be comfortable doing it and want to do it.

Pull the rug out from underneath us of those things that we lean on of the world. Convict us. Convert us anew, and cleanse us, we pray. Bring that power for service. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Gift of Tongues

Our topic today is the third in a series on the Holy Spirit. By way of review concerning the first two parts, to begin with we studied about the danger of going out looking for the spectacular and about the danger of looking for shortcuts in the Christian life. We also noticed that you cannot judge the true versus the false by some great power manifestation or good feeling or the miraculous or emphasis on the Bible or on Jesus or on love or by spiritual insights or even changed lives.

Last week we suggested that you cannot even tell the true by supernatural revelations of other people's lives and characters or by sincerity in fasting and prayer. So the question still remaining is this: How are we going to discern truth from error? It looks as if we have thrown out every measure that we might be able to use.

Last week we studied about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We noticed that it has to do with a definite experience. One may know whether he has received it or not. We saw that it is a work of the Holy Spirit, often distinct from and in addition to His regenerating work, and that it is a work of the Holy Spirit always connected with and primarily for the purpose of service. We noticed that it is for everyone and that even the children can experience this. We studied the work of the Holy Spirit in its four phases: (1) to convict the world, (2) to convert the sinner, (3) to cleanse the Christian, and (4) to empower for witness, which is the phase under which the unique gifts and supernatural manifestations come.

Our main premise last week was that no one gets the gifts of the Holy Spirit and His supernatural manifestations without first hav-

ing experienced the Holy Spirit's power to overcome all known sin in the life. The gifts of the Spirit under the baptism of the Spirit are not for the purpose of giving us victory over known sin. Finally, we noticed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is received by accepting Jesus as our only hope of salvation, by renouncing all sin through His power, by obedience in service, by thirsting and longing for it, and by specifically asking for it.

Now, today, we are going to talk about the gift of tongues. Someone might say, "Why the gift of tongues?" The reason is that most of us who have had any awareness of religion and the Bible at all haven't really had much problem with the gifts of the Spirit *except* tongues. We will look at all the gifts of the Spirit as we begin; then we will concentrate on the one that seems to be under the greatest question. For that purpose we turn to Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4 does not list all of the gifts. It lists some of them. I am beginning with verse 8: "When he [Jesus] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Verse 11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets [notice the emphasis on the word *some*]; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Now, as long as we are right here in Ephesians 4, I would like to have you notice one other verse, verse 23, which we have reason to consider later in our study. "Be renewed *in the spirit of your mind*." The only thing I want you to catch here, as long as we are in this chapter, is that the renewing of the Spirit and the renewing of the mind are somehow closely connected. In fact, it is called "*the spirit of your mind*." We will notice in a moment why that verse is important. All right, now to proceed further with the gifts we will go to First Corinthians 12. As you know, the apostle Paul deals with these gifts from the twelfth chapter right on through the fourteenth.

The chapter starts right out by saying, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." Then there follows a description of how the Holy Spirit brings the gifts through different operations, and in verse 7 some of the gifts of the spirit are

listed. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."

Then it proceeds to point out (verse 11) that the Spirit does this "as *he* will." And in verse 18: "*As it hath pleased him* [God]." It is according to *His* initiative, His choice, His will. Then there is a summary in the last of the chapter, beginning with verse 28, where it lists some of the gifts in a sort of sequence. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" The unspoken answer to each one of these is No. Does everybody have the same gift? No.

Now, before we concentrate on the gift of tongues in First Corinthians 14, I want to read to you what Jesus Himself said as He told His disciples of the work that they would do. I am reading from Mark 16:17 and 18: "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." So by Jesus' own words the gift of tongues was predicted.

Now, if you go back to the original language on what these "new" tongues are, you find that what is meant is that the tongues are new to *them*. It is not talking about some new tongue that has never been known or heard of before. It is like my boy buying a new car. I have a teen-age boy who bought one a while back. It was a 1960 model. It was new to him. It didn't take him long to find out that it was old. Even for me, it's the only way I have left to buy a car anymore. I can't buy a brand-new one. The market went off and left

me. And so when I buy a new car, it is a used car, but new to me.

When these disciples were told that they would speak in new tongues, the very intent of the language indicates tongues that were already used before but new to them. That is the explanation of Mark 16:17.

All right now, as we go to First Corinthians 14, we come to a problem. If you don't realize that there is a problem, then you haven't read First Corinthians 14 yet. The problem is that at first reading there appear to be a certain number of ambiguities in this passage, things that are not entirely clear. What has made it even more difficult is some of the modern translations.

For instance, one version translates the word "tongues" in the fourteenth chapter as "the language of ecstasy." Now there is no support whatever in the Greek for "the language of ecstasy." There is a good Greek word for ecstasy which doesn't even show up once in this chapter of Paul's. If you will look up what is meant by "ecstasy" in the dictionary, you will find that it is "a state of being beyond all reason and self-control, given over to an extreme and engrossing emotion; obsession by a powerful emotion." The inherent idea here is that in ecstatic states people are operating separate, or apart from, their minds. The mind is dormant! Does the Bible really teach that kind of thing? That's a good question.

The word "tongue" is translated from the word *glōssa* which means *nothing more than "tongue" or "language."* But the King James translators have inserted the word "unknown." You will notice that in the older editions it is in italics, which means that it is a word supplied by the translators. Now, the question in First Corinthians 14 is this: "Are there two manifestations of tongues, or is there only one?" Is there a manifestation of tongues for the purpose of communicating the gospel in a known language because of a language barrier? Is there also a manifestation of tongues in terms of ecstatic utterances, called "angel language" by some, which is simply for the purpose of private worship and communication with God? Are both of these types spoken of in First Corinthians 14, or is there only one?

Let's look first at a bit of apparent support for ecstatic utterances. In verse 2 you have this statement: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." Now, the simple reading of that verse could give the impression that there is support here for some kind of ecstatic utterance.

Verse 4 is another one that gives you almost the same impression. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." Verse 14: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." That could sound like the mind is dormant while some kind of phenomenon is taking place in the "spirit," whatever that is.

The final place that is rather heavy on this is verses 27 and 28, where Paul is giving the direction on how to proceed with this gift. He allowed for not more than two or three, and "let one interpret" (also verses 5 and 13), "but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and speak to himself, and to God." So you have here apparent evidence for ecstatic utterances.

However, when you go through the same chapter and look at two or three other verses, you will find the other side of the coin. For instance, in verse 9, Paul says, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." Verse 19: "*In the church* I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Verse 22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." So you have these verses in apparent opposition to ecstatic utterances. The question is, What do you do about it?

Now, I would like to give you a little example of what we call "hermeneutics," which is the science of interpreting the Scriptures correctly, or simply the science of interpretation. The established church in the days of the Reformation took the position, stated so by the Bible, that there is no prophecy of the Scripture of any "private interpretation." No man is smart enough to interpret

the Scripture, the church taught, and therefore it is not any individual's business. There is no room for any layman to say, "I believe that this means this, or I believe it means that." So how can you understand Scripture if you cannot interpret it?

The church, of course, was opposed to Luther's and the other Reformers' position. Luther came up with the Bible approach that whenever you find a passage that is hard to be understood you don't say, "I think this, or I think that." Instead you look up everything else in the Bible on the same subject and come to the conclusion only after you have done that. Let the Scripture interpret itself. Is that right? That is the only way to have a proper hermeneutic for Scripture. This was the historic Protestant position. Protestants, by and large, have left this position, and have taken instead what each man thinks the Bible means. Seventh-day Adventists have tried to hold to the original Protestant position. Whether we have always done so or not could be debated, but let me give you an example.

In Luke 23:43 we have the story of the thief on the cross where apparently Jesus promised him that he would go to heaven that day. Right? If you were to read only Luke 23:43 on what happens to a person when he dies, you might come to the wrong conclusion without question. If you were to take Luke 16, with the idea of getting information on the condition of man in death, you could come up with a very definite indication of an eternally burning hell-fire with an abyss and people communicating back and forth between heaven and hell and so on.

So you can take these texts, which many people have done, and assume your own position on the state of man in death. But you have taken only part of the Scripture on the subject. The proper approach insists that we go through the Bible and put together everything we can find on the subject of death and what happens to a man when he dies. As a result of that we came up years ago with the conclusion that death is an unconscious sleep in the grave until the resurrection. The overwhelming weight of evidence is for that. When we had come to that conclusion, then we went back to Luke 23

and tried to find out how these texts could be harmonized after having let the Bible interpret itself on the subject. Right? And we found on second look that these could be harmonized and understood in the total picture.

You have another sample in the truth of Christ's coming. There are texts in Scripture that seem to indicate that Christ is going to come secretly, but when you read everything on the second coming of Christ that you can find, you come up with the conclusion that it is going to be a cataclysmic world event—nothing secret at all about it. After you have done that, you go back to the texts that seemed to sound as if He is coming secretly, as a thief, and you examine them again. What do you find? That it is simply talking about the *day* of the Lord or the *time* of His coming "as a thief." And this now harmonizes with the whole package.

This has always been our approach and should be our approach to Scripture. So what I am suggesting to you today is this: Let's admit that First Corinthians 14, by itself, is a hard chapter. There appear to be incongruities there. There are sections that are hard to understand. So what do you do? You do the same thing that the Protestant position has always indicated. You go everywhere else in the Bible dealing with the same subject and draw your conclusion. After that you come back to the hard portion and see what happens then. Will you follow me on this? Shall we try it?

Because there are very few references to tongues in the Bible, it won't take us long to come to a conclusion. We will begin by going to Acts 2. We are not going to take time to read the whole chapter. You will want to do this at home. The Day of Pentecost had come, verse 4. The disciples "were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." They began to "*speak*." So this is the gift of *speaking* or of tongues.

Then it goes ahead and lists the reaction. The people "were all amazed." It lists more than twelve different language groups who heard in their own tongues, which means that the twelve disciples, if they were all speaking a different tongue, would need to have

been helped by others of the 120 from the upper room.

Then we come down to verse 12 and read, “They were all amazed. and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” But Peter told them that it was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel.

Now these people who listened, verse 8, also said, “We hear every man in our own tongue.” I have heard it said by some Bible students that the disciples spoke in all the same language, but the people *heard* in different languages. This would not be the gift of tongues. It would be the “gift of ears,” but let’s allow for both the possibility that the disciples *spoke* in a language and people *heard* in a different language than that spoken, something happening to it in between time.

We do have some evidence in modern missions of it actually happening both ways. Of this Pentecostal experience in Acts 2, I don’t know of anyone who has any question but that it was known language speaking and that each of these different languages was one that solved a genuine language barrier because of the different people and different nationalities there that day. So we have no need to belabor the point here. However, some have taken the position that Acts 2 is the *only* reference in Scripture of tongues referring to known languages. I would like to show you from Scripture that that is not so.

We go to the next instance of tongues found in Acts 10. Here you almost have to read the whole chapter to get the picture, but you recall that Peter had been sent by God to Cornelius. Some people say that Cornelius was a brand-new convert out of heathenism, but if you read verse 22, it says that Cornelius was a just man and one that feared God, and he was even of good report among all the nation of the Jews. So there is some evidence that Cornelius was already a godly, spiritual man before Peter showed up. Cornelius also fasted and prayed. That shows something else about his life.

Finally Peter arrived on the scene and began to present the truth God had sent him to reveal. Cornelius and his relatives and friends were there in the house. Verse 44: “While Peter yet spake these

words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” And those who were with Peter, you notice, were astonished because on Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. Verse 46: “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” Notice these *two* things, “They heard them speak with tongues, *and* magnify God.” Then Peter said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as *well as we*?”

What does that phrase indicate right here? Peter and the other apostles had received the Holy Ghost manifested in tongues at Pentecost which were known languages. Now he says, “As well as we.” Does it indicate anything? Just to clarify it further let’s go to the next chapter, chapter 11, verse 15.

Now Peter is back at Jerusalem defending himself before “the General Conference.” They have called him into serious question for going over to the Gentiles and for what happened there. He tells the whole story in detail, and finally he says, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.” “*As on us at the beginning.*” Is this clear? The indication from Scripture is that it was the same manifestation that had been experienced by the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Isn’t this safe to conclude?

We will now go to the next instances of tongues found in Acts 19 where you have a group of twelve men. These are the twelve we noticed the other day who had not really heard whether there was a Holy Ghost or not. And Paul went immediately to the task of helping them receive something further in their experience. Verses 5 and 6: “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.”

Now, there is nothing in the context here that says whether it was known languages or ecstatic utterances, but on the basis of our study so far there would be no reason to suspect that it would be anything else than a known language.

Just to give us extra help on this I am going to quote from the

book *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 283. Here it describes what happened with these twelve. “With deep interest and grateful, wondering joy the brethren listened to Paul’s words. By faith they grasped the wonderful truth of Christ’s atoning sacrifice and received Him as their Redeemer. They were then baptized in the name of Jesus, and as Paul ‘laid his hands upon them,’ they received also the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by which they were enabled to *speak the language of other nations* and to prophesy. Thus they were qualified to labor as missionaries in Ephesus and its vicinity and also to go forth to proclaim the gospel to Asia Minor.” So I am taking the position at this point that all the instances of tongues so far are referring to known languages for the purpose of communicating the gospel. Is that clear at all?

Once we have read everything else on the subject, what is our approach to Bible interpretation? To go back to First Corinthians 14 where we had our hard time and see if our conclusion can at all be realistic in the rereading of that chapter. As you have noticed, we are taking the position today that First Corinthians 14 is the only chapter in all the Bible in which you might possibly see ecstatic utterances as an option. However, it is significant to note that the Greek word for tongues in both First Corinthians 14 and Acts 2 is the same!

I want to go back to the verses that we read to begin with and substitute “Sikkimese.” Now, there is a little country way over in the Far East known as the country of Sikkim. I don’t know of anyone who knows the language of Sikkim. I am choosing out one of the least known tongues in the world—Sikkimese. Imagine here today that we have a congregation of people all listening in English, but I am speaking this other language. Read it that way in verse 2. “For he that speaketh in Sikkimese speaketh not unto men.” Would that be true? If I knew Sikkimese and I got up here and was going to talk to you, I would not really be speaking to you, would I? No. “But unto God.” Well, I am sure God knows Sikkimese.

Therefore, if I spoke in a language other than you are used to, I would not be speaking unto men, but unto God, for no man would

understand me. Does that make sense? You don't have to read these words in verse 2 simply in one way as though it had to be an ecstatic utterance of some kind. Not at all.

Verse 4 is another hard one. "He that speaketh in Sikkimese edifieth himself," but no one else. Correct? Of course! I would be the only one edified if I came here from Sikkim and talked to you in my language today. But I still wouldn't be edified if I didn't know what I was saying any more than you would be edified if you didn't know what I was saying (verse 5). This would prohibit any practical use of tongues for private working as well unless the worshiper understood what he was saying. Understanding is absolutely essential for edification! This would lead to the next logical conclusion: If I understood what I was saying in private worship in another tongue, what would be the purpose for another tongue in private worship anyway? It would be pointless!

Now we go over here to verse 14, another hard one. "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." Here it sounds as if a person can be talking in a tongue that he does not understand himself, but I would like to refer you back to the Greek. Here is actually what the Greek rendering of it would indicate: "If I pray in Sikkimese, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful *to all others*." Or my understanding *by you* is unfruitful. It would not be stretching it at all to paraphrase it this way: "If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but *your* understanding is unfruitful." That is essentially what it is about in verse 14.

All right now, we will go over to this question of interpretation. We already noticed that the person who is speaking in tongues should interpret. This could cause a problem unless you go back and find out what the original word includes. It includes not only the idea of interpretation, but also of expounding or explaining or translating. So wherever you find the word "interpret," or "interpreter" used in First Corinthians 14, which is in verse 5, verse 13, and on over here in verses 27 and 28, you can also substitute the English words "expound, explain, or translate" or "expounder,

explainer, or translator.” The same word in First Corinthians 12:10, speaking of the interpretation of tongues can also mean the translation of tongues or the expounding or explaining. It is not confined to the word “interpret,” which means that you are not locked in on any one set word indicating ecstatic utterances that need to be interpreted.

I want to take up one other problem in First Corinthians 14 which has to do with “the spirit.” You find this in verse 2: “In the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” You find it also in verse 14: “If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth.” Verse 15: “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”

What does this mean? Some have said, “This means that there is an entity in man that somehow operates separately from the mind or from the understanding.” But this appears to be doing injustice to Scripture for the reason that we have already noticed earlier in this study, in Ephesians 4:23, that the renewing is the renewing of our *mind*, or the spirit of our *mind*. And if you go to Romans 12:2, you find it definitely stated that the manifestation of God is through what? We are transformed by the renewing of our *minds*. God does not operate apart from man’s mind, reason, and understanding, which would be necessary in order to allow for this ecstatic utterances thing. “The mind controls the whole man. All our actions, good or bad, have their source in the mind. It is the mind that worships God.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 426.

In conclusion, at the very end of time there is going to be a great attempt to deceive and to counterfeit God’s true Spirit. Antichrist is going to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. That’s why we have taken the time to follow a Christian hermeneutic in approaching Scripture that would explain tongues today.

In the early days of our church there was a movement in which unknown tongues seemed to be breaking out. This comment was made in volume 1 of the *Testimonies for the Church* on page 412:

“Some of these persons have exercises which they call gifts and say that the Lord has placed them in the church. They have an unmeaning gibberish which they call the unknown tongue, which is unknown not only by man but by the Lord and all heaven. Such gifts are manufactured by men and women, aided by the great deceiver. Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here.”

Now, in the light of what we have studied today, I am going to take the position that there is no support in Scripture for ecstatic utterances. If you take everything in the Scripture on the subject, you will find that there is no support in Scripture for tongues, whether known languages or ecstatic utterances, *for the purpose of private worship*. The instances of tongues through the Holy Spirit and His gifts are always for the purpose of communicating the gospel because of a language barrier.

First Corinthians 14 does not suggest anything different from this if you read it in the light of the total picture. Remember also that the total picture we have studied comes from Luke, the author of Acts, and from Paul, the author of Corinthians. They were directly associated together in the work of the gospel and certainly familiar with the problems common to both.

“There is a great work to be done. The world will not be converted by the gift of tongues, or by the working of miracles, but by preaching Christ crucified.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 424. “The greatest manifestation of its [the Holy Spirit’s] power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, volume 7, page 143.

I had a young lad come to me one time over in Colorado who had been going with a girl whom he deeply loved, and he did not want to lose her. But as time passed, she had discovered something about him that she hadn’t known at first. She found that he had a horrible temper. In fact, he had given evidence of this so often that she was growing cold and losing her respect for him and interest in him.

He was absolutely devastated by this. He came to me one day

with tears in his eyes and he said, "What am I going to do? I have heard of a meeting where I can go and get the baptism of the Holy Spirit including tongues and other things, including the victory over my temper. I think I am going to go. What is your counsel?"

I gave him the same counsel that I gave here last week. You don't go anywhere for some special manifestation of the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit, including tongues, to get any kind of victory over known sin in your life. You don't do that. Would it be possible to be more interested in victory than to be interested in Christ? And isn't being interested in getting over my temper so I can keep my girl friend a selfish reason such as was the reason of Simon Magus in Acts 8?

Would it be possible to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit because something spectacular is going on that might do something to my life and thereby be seeking it for an entirely wrong reason? Would that be possible? That's why I conclude again here, my friends: Don't go to these places looking for some special blessing. If, on the basis of God's Word, you have serious reason to question them in the first place, don't go. Don't look for shortcuts in the Christian life, and don't be enamored by the spectacular. The enemy would be happy to trade victory for some spiritualistic phenomenon, would he not?

Let's say the going somewhere questionable for this kind of thing and searching for some special experience might be 90 percent safe, with only a 10 percent chance of being deceived. Just a 10 percent chance. Wouldn't you want to stay away for just a 10 percent risk? Wouldn't you? Especially when God has never told us anywhere in His Word to go off somewhere looking for or seeking some special work of grace or manifestation of His Spirit in these kinds of environments.

We have Jesus' example of going by Himself into the forest or to the hillside or into the garden where He, on His own knees, in His own closet, so to speak, received everything that the Spirit had to offer. That's my appeal to you. I hope that it has made sense and that God will protect us. And I am sure He wants to protect us from

all forms of deceptions and phenomena that are not in harmony with His will today. Shall we pray.

Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for Your love and Your promise to be concerned with us—just as concerned as anyone in the whole universe, and more so. We pray that You will guide everyone who is seeking a deeper walk with You. And send Your Spirit to give us insight and wisdom and understanding. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Mighty Angel of Revival

Today we are going to study the "fourth" angel's message. I suppose you are familiar with the three angels that precede him. Our text is in Revelation 18. We have been studying about the Holy Spirit—the baptism of the Holy Spirit and His great final work in the salvation of this world. We have noticed some of the dangers involved through possible deception in counterfeit revivals. Now we want to pay special heed to the genuine revival as suggested by this fourth angel's message.

In Acts 2 the apostle Peter describes the Day of Pentecost as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Here Peter refers, as did Joel before him, to the signs in the sun, moon, and stars. This means that the prophecy of Joel has a double application. Signs in Joel's prophecy occur not only at Pentecost, but also at the end of the world—the end of time. Obviously the signs involving the sun, moon, and stars had not yet taken place in the days of the apostle Peter. They have in our day, or grandfather's day, and so the prediction made by Joel can still be expected before Jesus comes.

We will begin with verse 1 of Revelation 18. "And after these

things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." As you know, Revelation is a book full of symbols. This angel symbol is simply referring to God's work on the earth, involving all of the forces of heaven, the angels, and God's people. It isn't simply talking about a single angel doing this work. Just as is the case with the three angels of Revelation 14, this is a symbol of a mighty work going throughout the earth—great power, great light, great glory.

Now we go immediately to his message. "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." Back in the Sligo Church one day I heard a speaker quote this text, and he said, "What would a strong voice be?" An elderly man with a hearing aid down in the front shouted it out. I can still hear him. "A voice that could be heard!" Something is going to be heard around the world. What is it?

Right here you may get bogged down with a bit of disappointment about the message, "Babylon the great is fallen." Well, what kind of news does that sound like?

I can remember thinking that the three angels' messages were (1) the judgment is here, (2) get out of corrupt churches, (3) beware of the pope. Is this the sum total of the three angels' messages? I had to take a second look.

There is something more involved in Babylon than what we sometimes suppose. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is the great message of revival? Foul spirits, cages, birds, and Babylon? What do you make of that?

Verse 3: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." All nations? That's pretty inclusive, isn't it? You mean that what we ordinarily think of when we think of Babylon has penetrated into the little country of Sikkim that we talked about a couple of weeks ago? How could that be? What about all the giant countries that represent the Moslem faith, and so on? Verses 4 and 5: "I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of

her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

In order to get any sense out of this scripture, we have to find out what "Babylon" is all about. You are aware that, in the days before the Reformation, the Waldenses, at the risk of their lives, took the position that Babylon had something to do with Rome. You are aware that this was Martin Luther's position. But we are not going to talk about that today—the historical concept of the Waldensians or of Luther. We are not going to talk about this passage from an eschatological standpoint. I want you to notice what the real problem with Babylon is and how it is that this Scripture can be talking about a great revival in spite of the birds and the cages and the spirits and the symbols here.

Babylon got started at the Tower of Babel. Is that right? Nimrod, the mighty hunter and his corrupt wife, Semiramis, were instigators of pagan sun worship. The city and the tower they built was a follow-through on their philosophy. They said, "We know that God has promised not to send another flood, but we are not so sure that He is big enough to keep His promise. We'd better help Him out." So they began to get together the brick and mortar and to build a tower from earth to heaven. It was a classic example of man trying to save himself. Is that right? The very origin of Babylon was in saving one's self by one's own works.

Nebuchadnezzar was caught in this same trap. The city, the world capital, of which he was the king simply represented the continuation of this ancient beginning with the Tower of Babel. He wandered around on his veranda and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" Nebuchadnezzar had "I" trouble. He had not noticed the first angel's message or the second. Well, it wasn't written yet, of course, but Nebuchadnezzar had a *personal revelation from God*, and he should have known something about the first angel's message. You don't give glory to yourself, king! You give glory to God, the One who is keeping your heart beating.

So "do it yourself" and "Babylon" are synonyms. From the book

The Great Controversy, page 381, I read: "The term 'Babylon' is derived from 'Babel' and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion." From *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 73: "Nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation." And *The Desire of Ages*, pages 35 and 36, speaking about the Jewish people in the days of Jesus, adds this: "The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin."

Wherever the idea that you can save yourself by your own works is held, there are no barriers against sin! Have you ever noticed that? And so we have to come to the conclusion that you don't have to be in Babylon to be a Babylonian. We must not simply confine this whole thing to some group out here or some group over there that we have designated as Babylon. It is possible for me to be a victim of the Babylonian principle and be sitting in a Seventh-day Adventist church. Is that right? Is it possible for me to be caught in the very trap that I have been preaching against? That's the issue here in this Babylon thing.

Now, some people, years ago, said that the church had become Babylon. Not so! There is a big difference in the church becoming Babylon and Babylon being in the church. The only necessity for Babylon to be in the church is for me to be a victim of Babylon *and* to be in the church at the same time. And there you have it. The indication here is that Babylon fell a long time ago. Now, don't you go falling with it. Come out of her, my people, because Babylon is full of every foul spirit and unclean thing. There is no power in Babylon, either; which means that this angel who gives this mighty warning has a close connection with the great theme that we have called "righteousness by faith in Christ alone." That is the antithesis of Babylon—the powerful message of this angel, this mighty angel of revival in Revelation 18.

I am going to quote several times from the inspired commentary of Ellen G. White. How you relate to it, of course, is your business, and how much authority you place upon it is up to you. I don't like to do this very often, but there are so many insights here into the great revival that is going to come before Jesus returns that I am going to turn to it today as we pursue the understanding of Revelation 18.

First of all, please notice that the essence of the beginning, the content, and the finish of the great revival that finishes God's work is indicated by these remarks: "The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already *begun* in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer." This was printed in the *Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892. This revelation is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth—the angel of Revelation 18.

A week later, November 22, 1892, the *Review* had this statement: "A work is to be accomplished in the earth similar to that which took place at the outpouring of the holy Spirit in the days of the early disciples, when they preached Jesus and him crucified. Many will be converted in a day; for the message will go with power." We have noticed with this, then, that the beginning of the mighty revival angel and his work is the message of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer.

Second, notice the content, or the continuing essence, of this message in *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 92: "All power is given into His [Christ's] hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent." Is there anyone helpless here today that has been trying to produce some righteousness? Take courage. This is for you. The priceless gift of Jesus' own righteousness is available for you. Read on: "This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in large measure." So that's the *content* of the revival message.

Finally, here is the sum total, as found in *Testimonies*, volume 6, page 19: "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which *closes* the work of the third angel." The beginning, the middle, and the end of the final revival all center around the message of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Do you understand that message? I want to understand it more.

Now we have come up with some terms that are, I suppose, rather unique to our subculture, "the early, or former, rain" and "the latter rain." Of course, these are biblical terms found in Hosea 6:3; Zechariah 10:1; and James 5:7, 8, indicating that in God's great harvest field you need rain to get the wheat started or the grain begun. You need showers all the way along, and you need a good rain just before the harvest. I am not a farmer, but I know the importance of rain.

We have called the Day of Pentecost the early rain, which carries on through to the completion of God's work on the earth. The latter rain, similar to the former, or early, contributes to and finishes the harvest at the end of time.

I would like to say today that the loud cry of this fourth angel is a message. It is the message of warning against self-worship and of an invitation to Christ's righteousness. The latter rain is the power of the Holy Spirit attending the teaching, preaching, and living of that message. It starts small and swells into a loud cry. Everybody is going to hear. I believe it has already started.

The latter rain, as we have seen, is the final manifestation of the baptism of the Spirit. You don't have to wait for the latter rain to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and all of His power. In fact, we are told that we shouldn't wait for it, but you need the same preparation for the latter rain as you do the baptism of the Spirit.

The baptism of the Spirit doesn't have any timetable on it. It has been available since Pentecost and evidently was available before Pentecost way back into the Old Testament, but in a unique and special way since Pentecost. The latter rain does have a timetable

on it, because of the use of the word "latter." You know it has to be the last. That's very simple, but it doesn't mean that it is reserved for some special time and we should sit around polishing pews waiting for this thing to happen, which is often the case in the church of God. When you see the showers of the latter rain, you are going to see the great revival which is simply the last of what God has intended all along. We can know the baptism of the Spirit now! But let's take a look at this last great revival that sweeps the world because people have responded to the call of God.

I have a few points here that might be of interest to you, describing what happens during the latter rain, or this great revival. First of all, God is going to "take the reins into His own hands." Now, that is an old-fashioned expression. I think we are well aware of that. I remember riding to town with Aunt Lucy in her carriage pulled by Old Nell, and I wasn't too interested in taking the reins from Aunt Lucy. I was only four. Somewhere along the line it is obvious that man in the church with the reins in his hands hasn't been doing too well. We ought to turn the reins over to God, hadn't we? If we don't, He is going to take them anyway. That's what it says in *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 300. Then we are going to be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work in righteousness.

And when God takes the reins in His own hands and says that it is time to call "30" for tonight, "the message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. . . . Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides."—*The Great Controversy*, page 612.

Sometimes we have got bogged down with argument and debate. There were some old-time preachers who loved to argue and debate back in the last century, and they were reprimanded for it. I

read about a backwoods preacher who, *mis*-using Scripture, quoted, "Without *controversy* great is the mystery of godliness." Then he said, "You can't get the gospel if you don't argufy." Well, that was a misquote as demonstrated by those who have relied upon those means. No more debating and arguing, but the deep movings of the Spirit of God.

Something else that seems to be apparent about this great revival. *Early Writings*, page 277: "Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere. 'Come out of her, My people.' . . . This message seemed to be in addition to the third message."

That's worth remembering because there will come a time when people will say, "Now, don't we already have the three angels' messages? Everything has been nailed down rather solid. Let's not come up with something new." It is going to *seem* to be in addition to, and that's why a long time ago we were told not to talk about righteousness by faith as though it was new light. We are supposed to talk about it as though it were old light that has been lost sight of. It is old. It is the message from Cain and Abel. It is the message of Adam and Eve who had to sew fig leaves together when God had provided light before. It is the message of the Flood and the Tower of Babel. It is the message all down through the centuries, the unique message of self-surrender by Jesus, of the need of a greater power than your own strength, your own efforts, your own works. It is old light, sometimes presented in new framework.

Here is something else about the great revival. John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power." Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. So during this revival the gift of tongues is going to be revived as well. Quite obvious, isn't it? And notice the phrasing, "Then, *as at the Pentecostal season*, thousands of voices will be imbued with power to speak for the wonderful truths of God's Word. The stammering tongue will be loosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear a courageous testimony to the truth." Is there someone timid here? Is there

someone that has trouble with stammering or stuttering? This is good news for you. That's *Gospel Workers*, first edition, page 383.

Another point during this revival: "Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers."—*The Great Controversy*, page 612. So you are going to have all of the evidence of the Day of Pentecost and all that the disciples did is going to be done again through the power of God.

Now, here is something that should make the great men tremble. Are there any great men here today? Are there any great men anywhere? "In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them."—*Testimonies*, volume 5, page 80. The great men are going to fade from the picture. Get the reason why! You see, a "great" man is actually antagonistic to the whole principle of righteousness by faith in Christ alone. That's why some of the most unobtrusive, the weakest, the most unpromising people have turned out to be the greatest, used by God. Is that right?

I remember coming to La Sierra College and getting into speech class the first year. And there in the speech class was an ugly duckling if I ever saw one. Talk about stammering tongue! But he proved by God's grace and the motivation of the Spirit that he could conquer his problems and could make a real contribution to God's work. And some of the great leaders on the campus, the ones who had the "charisma," we have long since lost sight of. That's the way it is.

If I have something to depend on, I will tend to depend on it. Here is a strange statement for human reasoning, but it is the truth nonetheless: "It is a dangerous age for any man who has talents which can be of value in the work of God; for Satan is constantly plying his temptations upon such a person, ever trying to fill him with pride and ambition; and when God will use him, in nine cases out of ten he becomes independent, self-sufficient, and feels capable of standing alone. This will be your danger . . . unless you live a life of constant faith and prayer." Of all places, *Counsels on Health*, page 367!

Now notice the next paragraph: "Genius, logic, and eloquence will not avail. Those who have a humble, trusting, contrite heart, God accepts and hears their prayer; and when God helps, all obstacles will be overcome. How many men of great natural abilities and high scholarship have failed when placed in positions of responsibility, while those of feeble intellect, with less favorable surroundings, have been wonderfully successful. The secret was, the former trusted to themselves, while the latter united with Him who is wonderful in counsel and mighty in working to accomplish what He will." So if you are not at the top of the heap today in terms of great men, then thank God. He may be able to use you. And if you are a great man, then thank God when He pulls the rug out from underneath you.

Another thing happens during this time, as described in *Selected Messages*, book 2, pages 58 and 59: "Under the showers of the latter rain the inventions of man, the human machinery, will at times be swept away, the boundary of man's authority will be as broken reeds, and the Holy Spirit will speak through the living, human agent, with convincing power." Human machinery, inventions of man. My, you know, we certainly have plenty of those around! The electronic age and the age of invention has furnished us with all kinds of goodies to help take the gospel.

I remember black light hitting the scene, and preachers all over the country sitting up until midnight cutting out little pieces of felt and getting their black lights ready—going to finish God's work with black light. I remember sitting on a hotel veranda over in Upper Egypt in Luxor. We were about ready to leave after our tour with Dr. Horn, and here was one lone missionary who worked in and out among the mud and dung huts of the people of Upper Egypt. According to the Rockefeller study, this area is where the lowest forms of humanity still exist along with a few South Sea Islands.

One of the doctors in our group leaned forward and said, "What do you need? We are ready to supply you with anything you need. You name it. Need a projector? Need screens? Need some

equipment?" And I will never forget this man leaning forward with a solemn look on his face as he said, "What we need is more prayer!"

That night our train pulled out for Cairo. An executive from the railroad company was being promoted to Cairo to a higher position. He was a great man. All of the natives had come out there from Upper Egypt to wish him good-bye. They were shouting and singing and going through their thing in their way, and over in the shadows stood this lone missionary all by himself amid the shouts and the plaudits of the people for the other man. As we pulled away in the darkness, I could still hear his words, "What we need is more prayer!" We need more prayer. Do you buy that?

Something else that is going to happen during that time is that, when the boundaries of man's authority are swept away and the Holy Spirit speaks through the living agent, no one will then watch to see if the sentences are well rounded off or if the grammar is faultless. (I threw that in because of my own desperate need. You know, it is a traumatic thing to move to a university atmosphere after being through the usual mill of preaching to little groups of people out in the sticks of Colorado. As you see the speech professor sitting out there, you have this horrible black feeling sweep over you. Then you see the English department sitting over somewhere else, and you realize you have just ruined one word and followed that with a half dozen others. Then word begins to get back to you through the grapevine that they wondered how on earth you could say it that way, and pretty soon you begin to think about moving back to Steamboat Springs.)

Here it says that it is not going to be the issue any longer. Nobody is worried about it if the sentences are well rounded off or if the grammar is faultless. Do you feel as if you are short on the ability to teach the gospel, to tell someone else? Jesus has something special for you in terms of power that all of the other things cannot equal.

Now, we are not saying that we ought to go up and quit college. Some of you are saying, "That's what I have been wanting to do

anyway. I am going to quit college.” That’s not it at all. Some of the greatest impacts on the world have been through the scholarship and the scholastics and the great schools of Europe during the Reformation and other times. But the only person that can keep being used by God is the one who doesn’t *depend* on any of this. Is that right? He depends upon God instead of his own self-sufficiency.

Now, during the latter rain we have to be aware that there has been a preparation preceding it. Therefore, we don’t want to just simply talk on the great, mighty showers of the latter rain. It requires the same preparation that went on before I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I must know the power of God and the Holy Spirit for victory in my life, or I will never be involved with this mighty angel from heaven. So just a little bit here about the preparation for it.

Testimonies, volume 5, page 214: “Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or one stain upon them.” That could scare anybody who doesn’t understand righteousness by faith. “It is left with us [through the power of God] to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement.” Does Jesus have that kind of power available? I have to believe that He does. Then, it says, “The latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.”

One other, *Review and Herald*, November 19, 1908. “Only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it [the third angel’s message] when it shall have swelled into the loud cry.” Only those. That means I must know the power of God to pull out of Babylon and learn to depend completely upon Him before that time. Doesn’t it?

I would also like to warn you ahead of time that there is going to be opposition to the great revival of this angel. The Holy Spirit is going to be falling on hearts all around and many won’t even recognize it and appreciate it. *Review and Herald*, March 2, 1897.

Here is a description of that rising resistance, written in 1894 and found in *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 57: "The baptism of the Holy Ghost as on the Day of Pentecost will lead to a revival of true religion and to the performance of many wonderful works. Heavenly intelligences will come among us, and men will speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God." You know, I have had to conclude from my study that the day is going to come when someone is going to show up preaching the gospel with great power, and we'll look closely and we'll say, "Where is he from? Who is he?" And the only reply we will get is, "I don't know." I believe before this whole thing is over in this world that angels of God are going to show up in human form and preach the gospel. Listen to this: "Heavenly intelligences will come among us, and men will speak as they are moved by the Holy Spirit of God. But should the Lord work upon men as He did on and after the day of Pentecost, many who now claim to believe the truth would know so very little of the operation of the Holy Spirit that they would cry, 'Beware of fanaticism.' They would say of those who were filled with the Spirit, 'These men are drunk with new wine.' "

Opposition will rise against the genuine manifestation of God's power just as opposition rises against the false manifestation. And we are going to have to be close to God to be able to determine the difference. From the May 27, 1890, *Review and Herald*: "The light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory."

Finally, *Review and Herald*, November 7, 1918: "There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of their heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it." How could this possibly happen?

In our afternoon table talks, we studied eight steps that take

place in people's experience from now until Jesus comes again. You are probably aware, cruelly aware, that a lot of people enjoy sitting around talking about *political* and *international* affairs, but they seldom ever look at the events experientially and internally. You know, we seem to be much more concerned with what happens in the Middle East and Vietnam and all the rest than we are with what happens in our own hearts. I would like to make a little plea. Let's let the international and political things take care of themselves and begin taking a look at the events that go on internally and experientially, things that are taking place in your hearts and lives right now, and that will be before Jesus comes.

Notice five events:

1. There is a great emphasis upon righteousness by faith.
2. This great emphasis on righteousness by faith in Christ alone causes a "shaking" among God's people. Up until shortly before Jesus comes there are three groups of people—the hot, the cold, and the lukewarm. But after this shaking there will only be two, the hot and the cold. The lukewarm disappear, and that's the way it always has been when the message of Christ and His righteousness has been presented. Wherever Paul went, there was either revival or riot or both. And where Jesus talked, people either stood in the crowd and said, "Let's get rid of Him and push Him off the cliff," or they fell at His feet and said, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." No middle ground. This fence-riding thing is going to disappear, and it has already started, my friends. Have you noticed it? Three groups merge into two during the shaking.
3. The Holy Spirit and the angels begin to leave those who are not interested, and they double their numbers around those who are.
4. In this tremendous time of seeking Jesus instead of depending upon our own effort, victory is experienced—victory over self-dependence, which results in victory over sin too, because they are closely related. The reason we don't have victory over sin is that we have been depending on ourselves.
5. Those who have known the victory over depending upon themselves, victory over Babylon, if you please, become involved in

the loud cry of the third angel, the fourth angel's message—the great revival. Power attends them, and this power brings on what is called “the sifting,” or times of trouble or persecution.

Some people say that what we need in order to have the great revival is to have a few atom bombs go off somewhere. I remember some great world-shaking event that took place when we were back East one time, and there was a real revival in the church for one week, and then it was over. We don't need someone to push the wrong button to get the revival going. In fact, the indication is that it is the revival that brings on the trouble, not the trouble that brings on the revival. And then, because of the great power lighting the earth with its glory, this trouble develops into the time of trouble, and God's people wrestle for deliverance.

Finally, Jesus is seen coming in the clouds of heaven. And I hesitate to say that—as though it was old hat. Can you imagine what it will be like to see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven? Everything you thought was so important suddenly doesn't mean one thing! Houses, investments, clothes, cars—all mean nothing. All of a sudden every person on the earth has his attention riveted in the vaulted sky as they realize that Jesus is coming. Can you imagine what it will be like to know that by God's grace you have accepted Jesus' righteousness and you are on the right side?

Let's all take courage, my friends; revival is on its way. Don't you want to be a part of it, to be right in the middle of it, doing whatever God has for you to do? Will you join me in reaching up your hand and saying, “God help me to be part of this great movement as it finishes in the world?” Shall we pray.

Dear Father in heaven, we don't need more gadgets, more gimmicks; we don't need more goal charts; we need more prayer. Take us off of these seats, we pray, and to our knees in small groups here and there in our homes talking about it Sabbath afternoon. Bring us, we pray, to revival in our own hearts and lives. Help us to know Your power for victory and Your power for the baptism of the Spirit. And may each one here know which direction he is going today, right now, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.